

On September 11, 2001, LeRoy was flying with Captain Jason Dahl on United Flight 93. Based on information from several sources that day, we know LeRoy and Jason were the first to fight against the terrorist threat to the airplane.

LeRoy was able to accomplish much in his short life. He was able to do so because of the support of his family and friends, and the encouragement of his teachers and mentors. For his actions on board Flight 93, Homer received many awards and citations posthumously, including honorary membership in the historic Tuskegee Airmen, the Congress of Racial Equality's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Drum Major for Justice Award, and the Westchester County Trailblazer Award.

Above all of the accolades and awards, it is because of Homer's sacrifice that I pay tribute. I take great pride in recognizing Mr. LeRoy W. Homer, Jr., an African-American hero.

#### INSPIRING INTER-FAITH MUTUAL COOPERATION AND RESPECT

#### HON. THELMA D. DRAKE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 17, 2006*

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I had a unique opportunity to address on Holocaust Memorial Day (April 25) about 200 clergy and lay leaders representing 64 churches of the Presbyterian of Eastern Virginia at their quarterly meeting at the historic Carver Memorial Presbyterian Church in downtown Newport News.

The gathering on that particular day of members of the Presbyterian Church, USA, was coincidental though my invitation to join them was not. It was a very thoughtful and touching gesture by a minister friend of mine, the Rev. Dick Keever of Bayside Presbyterian Church in Virginia Beach who served as the meeting's moderator. It speaks volumes of the inspiring inter-faith climate of mutual cooperation and respect in greater Hampton Roads which I've come to appreciate during my 21 years of living in this community and serving it as a rabbi. From 1985 to 1995 my congregation of Beth Chaverim was the only one in the world to meet in a Catholic facility, the most gracious Church Of The Ascension in Virginia Beach.

I was most gratified and a bit concerned to be welcomed by Presbyterian colleagues and friends given the recent tensions born of the controversial resolution to consider divestment from companies doing business in Israel which impacts upon the Palestinians. I felt that resolution was far too one-sided and discriminatory failing to invest toward a better future for all. I also happen to be the first rabbi to have earned a doctoral degree from the Presbyterian affiliated McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, adding an intriguing dimension to my special encounter on a day reminding me more than any other of being a son of Polish Holocaust survivors. I spent my early childhood in a Displaced Persons Camp in Frankfurt, Germany, and then grew up in Haifa, Israel, prior to coming to Chicago in 1966 to join my Holocaust survivor grandmother who lost her own parents, five siblings and countless others.

I was moved to share with my distinguished Presbyterian audience that the poison unleashed from the destruction of European Jewry had allowed for other genocides to occur, from the killing fields of Cambodia to Bosnia, Rwanda, Saddam Hussein's mass graves, suicide bombers wreaking havoc in New York and Israel, and Sudan's Darfur region where those with lighter skin color begrudge the presence and very lives of those with darker skin. The Holocaust, the defining event of the previous century, may yet prove to be the beginning of the end of civilized human life. After all, it took place in Christian Europe at the hands of the German nation deemed to be a leader in many fields, yet so quickly succumbing to the worst of human impulses. Though it was nourished by centuries of church led demonizing and dehumanizing, persecutions and expulsions of a vulnerable minority that in spite of its abuse as a scapegoat refused to abandon its distinct heritage. Among the Holocaust's victims were members of my father's family, direct descendants of Spanish Jews expelled in 1492 and ultimately invited to build the town of Zamosc in eastern Poland in 1588, till Hitler sealed their destiny in 1939 without the option even of conversion.

The State of Israel, home to the largest number of Holocaust survivors who are now quickly diminishing with age, is the only nation-state on earth threatened openly with annihilation by the President of another state, Iran, while he denies that the Nazi Holocaust ever took place and thus proposing one as he is bent on acquiring a nuclear capability. I pleaded with the Presbyterians, having the misguided divestment plan in mind, not to endanger in any way the Holocaust's survivors who did not seek revenge at the war's end but rather to rebuild their lives in an ancient homeland where the dream of universal peace was first conceived. Survivors, like my parents, living in an Israel which ironically has not known shalom's blessings since its 1948 inception and on May 3rd will celebrate the 58th anniversary of the Jewish state. I vividly recall attending with my father Israeli military Independence Day parades early on, and his enthusiastic acclaim to the sight of a "Jewish tank" and a "Jewish plane," a response to our dire helplessness in the past and the sacred act of defending one's people and honor.

However, to presently despair in light of mighty challenges, would only betray the survivors noble and life-oriented spirit as well as the words of Anne Frank, one of a million and a half Jewish children including cousins of my own, "in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart, I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery and death." Indeed Jews, Christians, Muslims and all who share our anguished planet-earth ought to be reassured by Anne's loving message and make her vision a reality for all children including Israeli and Palestinian, American and Chinese, now and forever.

Rabbi Israel Zoberman is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach.

TRIBUTE TO MR. KEN POTTS

#### HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 17, 2006*

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Ken Potts who is moving on after having served our community in Southwest Michigan as the director of the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport for 16 years. Ken has a strong bond with the Kalamazoo area as he also received his BS in Aviation Technology and Management and his MBA from Western Michigan University.

Ken's distinguished career began as an intern as at the Kalamazoo Municipal Airport, which would later become the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport. After two stints managing airports in North Carolina and Vermont, Ken returned home to direct the airport where his career started in Kalamazoo—he remained there for 16 years. His other career highlights include being an Accredited Airport Executive by the American Association of Airport Executives and serving as President of the Michigan Association of Airport Executives.

After so many years of great service, I want to be sure that proper recognition was given to Ken; his long career in the aviation field speaks for itself and I think that all of us in Southwest Michigan are quite lucky that we had him aboard for so many years. The presence of an airport in Kalamazoo not only makes travel convenient for our local folks, it also makes our corner of Michigan attractive to businesses that continue to view Southwest Michigan as an ideal place to run their business.

Ken leaves our airport better than he found it. We wish Ken and his family all of the best in their future endeavors.

#### USA RENEWABLE FUEL ACT OF 2006

#### HON. JOHN T. SALAZAR

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 17, 2006*

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce my introduction of the USA Renewable Fuels Act of 2006. I worked on this legislation with Congressman GUTKNECHT of Minnesota, who is also a strong supporter of biofuels.

The USA Renewable Fuel Act of 2006 is aimed at assisting domestic producers of biofuels, including ethanol and biodiesel. This act would ensure that key provisions of the 2005 Energy Bill pertaining to renewable fuels production would apply to U.S. production only. My vision is to help make agriculture a partner in the energy future of this country by investing in U.S. producers and manufacturers of biofuels. This legislation helps ensure that vision.

Last year, Congress passed and the President signed legislation that doubles the use of ethanol and biodiesel by the year 2012. Recently there has been a push to eliminate tariffs on the importation of biofuels from other countries—an action that could threaten the competitiveness of domestic producers.

This bill will ensure that the Renewable Fuel Standard Congress passed last year will apply only to domestic production of biofuels. This bill will not discourage the importation of foreign biofuels, but will simply reserve a portion of the market for U.S. producers. My hope is to help promote the production and use of biofuels within the United States, and I believe this legislation will help achieve that goal.

Biofuel production is perceived to play a key role in the revitalization of rural America, including Colorado's 3rd Congressional District. Right now many farmers are taking the initiative by investing in the production of biofuels. It is our role as their representatives to provide the necessary tools and help in any way we can to achieve these goals and help revitalize our rural communities. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation as it moves forward.

TRIBUTE TO BISHOP VICTOR T. CURRY: CELEBRATING HIS 15TH PASTORAL ANNIVERSARY

**HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 17, 2006*

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to one of Miami's great spiritual and community leaders, Bishop Victor T. Curry.

On May 21, Bishop Curry will celebrate his 15th pastoral anniversary, and I want to echo the same sentiments of joy and gratitude that the 15,000 members of the New Birth Baptist Church in Miami will lift up to Almighty God on this happy occasion.

Bishop Curry's ministerial journey truly represents the best and the noblest of our community. As bishop, senior pastor, and teacher of New Birth Baptist Church, he is leading his congregation in the ways of God and has tirelessly worked to enlighten our community on the path to spiritual wisdom, social responsibility and good government based on the laws of God and the dictates of conscience.

I want to acknowledge the tremendous work he is doing in constantly guiding not only the members of New Birth Baptist Church, but also the entire family of the "The Cathedral of Faith International." He has truly exemplified the model of Christ as the Good Shepherd, and has led his flock, sharing with them the words of God's wisdom and the good news emanating from the gospel.

His motto—"From Vision to Victory"—has impacted the lives of countless people, for Bishop Curry has carried forth his message of hope in person, in newspapers, on television, and on radio. He has demonstrated, both by word and by example, his unconditional love for and commitment to our children, the elderly, the poor, the disenfranchised, and those less fortunate among us.

I therefore join with his congregation and our entire community in honoring Bishop Curry on his 15th pastoral anniversary and in wishing him many more in the years to come.

A SUCCESS STORY OF DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

**HON. BARNEY FRANK**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 17, 2006*

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, since congressional districts were realigned in Massachusetts in 1992, I have had the honor of representing a large number of Americans who trace their ancestry to the Republic of Cape Verde. As with other Americans who trace their ancestry to other nations, the Cape Verdean Americans who live in my district are very proud of their ancestral homeland, and are very much interested in my working to preserve good relations between our two countries. In the case of Cape Verde, that is very easy. The Republic of Cape Verde from the day of its independence has maintained a degree of democracy, respect for individual freedom, and respect for human rights that is very impressive. In the nature of things, people tend to hear bad news about other continents, countries or regions. But while it is important for us to give attention to those places where correction is needed, we should not by silence about successes let people think that there are none. I recently had the chance to read a very impressive study by Dr. Bruce Baker and Professor Roy May of Coventry University in the United Kingdom, entitled Cape Verde: The Most Democratic Nation In Africa?

In the acknowledgment to their report, the authors answer this question in the affirmative—We believe that the country fully lives up to the title of the most democratic nation in Africa.

Sensible space limitations prevent me from asking that their entire article be printed here. I do note that it will soon be appearing in a leading academic journal on African affairs. But given the importance of refuting the notion that democracy is somehow unsuited to African countries, a justification occasionally put forward by defenders of autocracy, I do want to quote some important passages here from their article:

One of the most striking indicators of Cape Verde's democratic maturity has been the ease by which power has been transferred, with defeated governments and their supporters accepting the electorate's verdict. Since the country's 1991 transition to multiparty democracy, Cape Verdeans have changed their government three times.

Deputies from both main parties believe the National Assembly to be effective in adversarial debate. Civil and political rights are enshrined in the constitution and widely respected in practice. The judiciary is regarded as independent and therefore free of political bias.

Mr. Speaker, the authors acknowledge that democracy of Cape Verde, as is true everywhere else, is not perfect, but they stress that there is an overall democratic atmosphere in Cape Verde in which those lapses can be pursued by people interested in improving the situation without fear of repression or retaliation.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to call attention to the thriving democracy in the Republic of Cape Verde both because it deserves attention in itself, and is a counter to those who argue that somehow democracy and respect for basic human rights is a west-

ern doctrine that cannot travel to other parts of the world.

Mr. Speaker, the Cape Verdean Americans whom I represent are very proud of their homeland, as they should be. It is entirely appropriate that the Bush Administration recognized the flourishing democracy of Cape Verde, among other aspects of that nation's governance, by making it one of the first recipients of funds under the new Millennium Challenge foreign aid program.

DAMU SMITH INTERNATIONAL RENOWNED ACTIVIST DIES AT AGE 54

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 17, 2006*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Damu Smith, who died May 5, 2006, and to enter into the record an article by Makani Themba-Nixon entitled Damu Smith, popular activist, dies at 54 which appeared on May 13, 2006 as a special to The Washington AFRO American.

Damu Smith was a people's activist who put his heart and energy into more than one cause. He was a St. Louis native and longtime Washington, D.C. resident, but he was renowned internationally as a great organizer and a man of ideas. He was a co-founder with Donelle Wilkins of the National Black Environmental Justice Network, NBEJN, in 1999.

As the first coordinator for Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice, Smith revealed the practice of some corporations that targeted poor African American Communities. He organized Toxic Tours in the South to help bring national attention to this very serious problem. The story of this successful campaign to force a PVC plant out of Norco, La., was made into Lifetime cable movie, Fenceline: A Company Town Divided.

Smith was a leader and co-founder of several social justice initiatives including Artists for a Free South Africa and Black Voices for Peace. For over 30 years, Smith worked to bring justice to all.

When Smith first became ill, his many friends and followers from many peace, environmental and social justice movements rallied around him to give him their full support as a way of showing their love and gratitude for everything he had done to promote peace, justice and preservation of our mutually shared planet.

Among the many projects Smith was involved in was promoting a national Martin Luther King Jr., Holiday. In the 1990s he joined Greenpeace USA and monitored corporate pollution on the Gulf Coast. He coordinated the first National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991, helping to link the civil rights movement to the environmental movement for the first time, colleagues said.

Born LeRoy Wesley Smith, he came to Washington in 1973. He later took the name Damu, which the Associated Press of May 8, 2006 reported means blood, leadership and strength in Swahili.

Damu Smith was a leader of great strength and passion. His causes were many and varied but all of them were about social justice